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STATINTL

EMPHASIS

REMARKS BY LEON PEARSON

LEON PEARSON: "Did Allen Dulles try to overthrow President De Gaulle?"

"Shortly after I had returned last week from Algeria, I was asked if it were true that General Maurice Challe had told me that he had received offers of support in the military coup d'etat from American sources. My reply was that I had never met General Challe and that he had never communicated anything to me, apart from an approval of my request to broadcast to NBC New York. No, he never told me anything about American offers of support, and yet the story of offers in one form or another is being circulated with such persistence that I begin to believe it.

"The first report appeared in the reliable Paris newspaper, Le Monde, April 29. The next day it appeared under sensational headlines in the London Sunday Dispatch, somewhat less reliable. And only last Sunday a summary of the report appeared in the New York Times, and I quote a sentence, 'A large number of Frenchmen are convinced that agents of the United States CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, that is, CIA, played a part in encouraging the recent mutiny of French generals in Algeria.'

"The most troublesome aspect of this business is that no responsible French official has denied the reports. My first reaction was that General Challe, who was formerly a commander of NATO forces, had been told by some U.S. officers in NATO that they agreed with him that the independence which President De Gaulle was prepared to negotiate with the Algerian rebel FLN might result in Soviet penetration into the Mediterranean, and even Soviet control of the important Algerian naval base at Mars el Kabir, but I felt this could have been nothing more than conversation, not a U.S. government commitment. I say this was my first reaction.

"Now, with the absence of any French denial, I began to wonder if Mr. Allen Dulles and the CIA may not have had a hand in the business. It would not be the first time that the CIA, with the honorable intention of protecting our defenses, had become crossed up with the foreign policy of the United States.

"On the other hand, I think it must be assumed that Mr. Dulles had no intention of overthrowing the President of France.